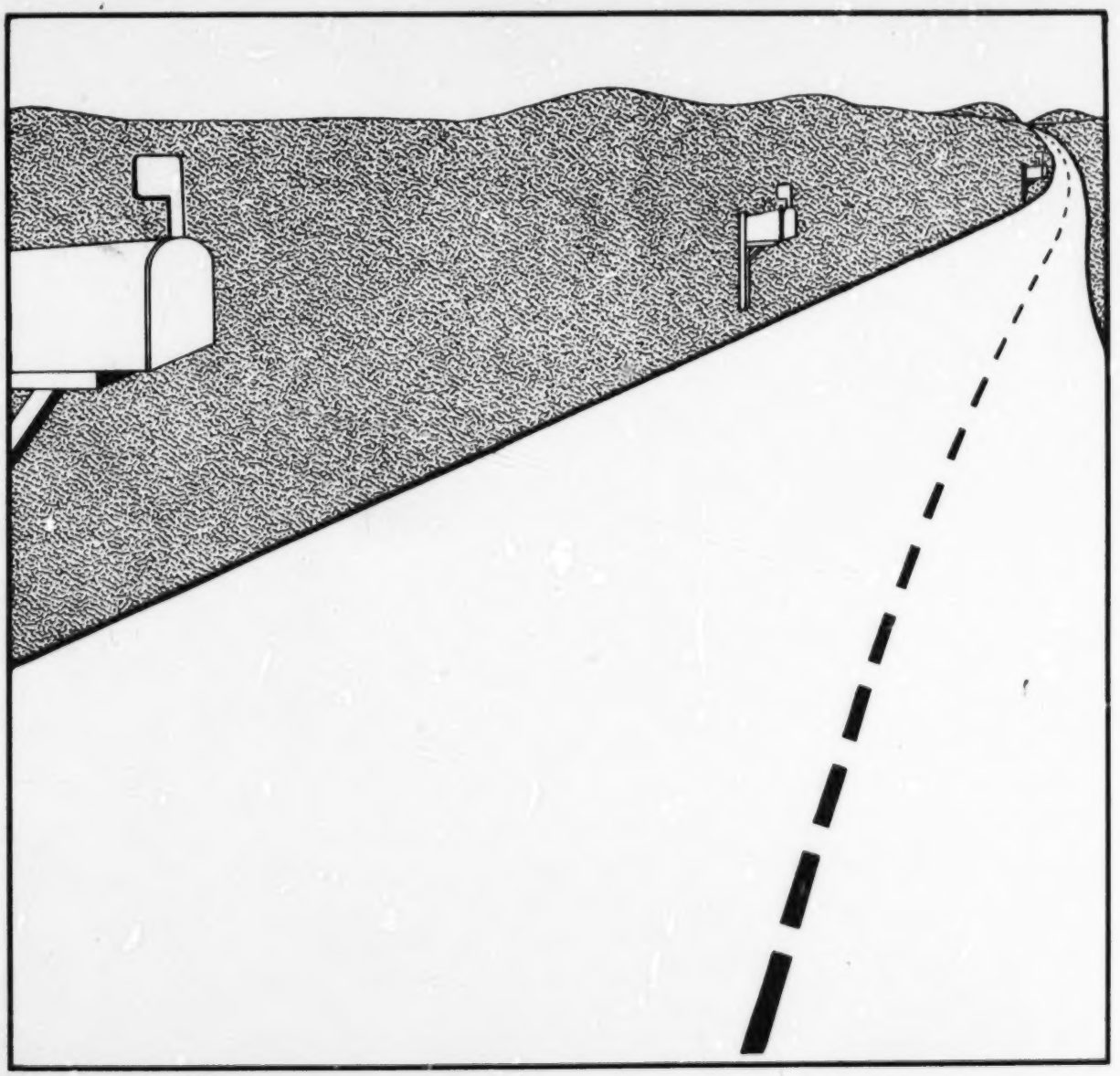
504

Highway Contract Routes
Box Delivery Service



Handbook PO-504
March 1, 1989

P1.31/13:

READEX FICHE best copy available

U.S. Postal Service
Washington, DC 20260-7100

A. Material Transmitted

1. Purpose. This handbook establishes a national policy for the operation and administration of highway contract routes box delivery service.

2. Explanation. This handbook has been revised to clarify dismounting regulations. It has also been revised to update references to Form 3849-A, *Delivery Notice or Receipt*, and Form 3849-B, *Delivery Reminder or Receipt*. These forms have been replaced by a new Form 3849, *Delivery Notice/Reminder/Receipt*.

B. Distribution

1. Initial. This handbook is being distributed directly to all regions, divisions, management sectional centers, transportation management service centers, mail processing centers, and administrative officials.

2. Additional Copies. Order additional copies from your materiel distribution center on Form 7380, *Supply Center Requisition*.

C. Superseded Instructions

This issue replaces all previous issues of Handbook PO-504 and supersedes any directives in conflict with the instructions in this handbook.

D. Effective Date

These instructions are effective upon receipt.

Allen R. Kane
Assistant Postmaster General
Delivery, Distribution, and Transportation Department

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Chapter 1
General Contract Administration

110 Purpose

This handbook establishes a national uniform policy for the operation and administration of highway contract routes (HCR) box delivery service. This policy requires continuous close coordination among managers of various operations (Mail Processing, Delivery Services, Transportation, etc.) in matters pertaining to box delivery.

120 Definitions

121 Box Delivery HCR

A box delivery HCR is a contract agreement between the Postal Service and a private individual or firm for the delivery and collection of mail from homes and businesses. The services provided by the HCR box delivery carrier are identical to those provided by postal rural route carriers. The contractor generally, depending upon the contract requirements set forth in the contract, performs specified duties, such as, maintaining a roster of customers; casing mail; selling stamps, certifieds, CODs, Express Mail, registers, or money orders; picking up mail from collection boxes; *and the mark up and forwarding of mail.* A route may be operated personally by the contractor (owner-operator) or the contractor may elect to hire employees. If hired employees are used regularly, they must be paid the wages and fringes as required by the current wage determination attached to the contract.

122 Contracting Officer

The contracting officer is a Postal Service employee specifically delegated authority to enter into binding contracts on the behalf of the Postal Service. Generally this authority may not be redelegated and only the contracting officer may modify, award, or terminate contracts. Transportation Management Service Center (TMSC) managers are the contracting officers for box delivery highway contract routes. Each has authority over a specifically defined geographic area.

123 Administrative Officials

An administrative official is any postal official designated by a TMSC manager (contracting officer) to supervise and administer the performance of mail transportation and related services by contractors. Generally, transportation contractors are administratively responsible to the headout postal installation. This involves managers/postmasters at management sectional centers (MSCs), mail processing centers (MPCs), and associate offices. Each solicitation/contract names the responsible administrative office. The administrative official must cooperate fully with the TMSC manager (contracting officer) in administering these contracts so that the USPS will receive the best possible service, planning, and contract performance at the lowest cost. *For matters involving the contract, the administrative official is responsible directly to the contracting officer.*

130 Responsibilities

131 Contracting Officers (TMSC Manager)

131.1 Authority to Contract. Each TMSC manager (contracting officer) is the only postal official authorized to enter into, execute, and approve both advertised and negotiated contracts for mail transportation and related services without dollar limitation. This includes regular highway, air transportation, emergency highway, bus, and inland domestic water contracts. *The TMSC manager is, therefore, the contracting officer for box delivery HCRs and has sole authority, except as stated in 12.3.5 of Publication 41, Procurement Manual, to enter into and to negotiate adjustments to those contracts.* The TMSC manager is directly

responsible to the Director, Office of Transportation and International Services, Mail Processing Department, Washington, DC.

131.2 Responsibilities Under the Contract. The TMSC manager is responsible under the contract general provisions for:

a. Ordering service changes which increase or decrease the contractor's annual rate of pay by no more than 10 percent or $1,000, whichever is lesser. The TMSC manager (contracting officer) may either "order-in" or negotiate these changes.

b. Negotiating other service changes with the contractor.

c. Terminating the contract for cause (unsatisfactory service) or for the convenience of the USPS. (See clauses 16 and 17 of Form 7407, *Basic Surface Transportation Services Contract General Provisions.*)

131.3 Accountability. TMSC managers are held accountable for service performance, for the transportation budget, and for energy consumption in their respective geographic service areas. Therefore, the TMSC must participate in all decisions concerning HCRs.

131.4 Contract Pay Administration. TMSC managers must take necessary actions to ensure that contractors are compensated properly and in a timely manner. They must also make appropriate deductions where the contractor fails to operate. When an entire trip of service is missed, the contracting officer will issue Form 7440, *Contract Route Service Order*, to deduct pay for the missed trip, in accordance with the general provisions of the contract, unless such omission is for reasons beyond the control of the contractor, such as "Acts of God," road conditions, or instructions of authorized postal personnel.

132 Division Managers

132.1 Approve the establishment of a box delivery route at a post office not having any such service.

132.2 Make recommendations to eliminate a box delivery route by consolidation.

132.3 Make recommendations to transfer territory between post offices.

132.4 Make recommendations to relocate a box delivery route from one post office to another.

132.5 Must review and concur with any proposed route changes recommended by an administrative official and/or MSC manager. Upon Division approval, the proposals will be submitted to the TMSC manager (contracting officer) for final evaluation prior to implementation or rejection.

132.6 Must review and approve changes initiated by Customer Services prior to submission to the TMSC manager (contracting officer) for final evaluation.

133 MSC Managers/Postmasters

133.1 Make recommendations for service changes through authorized channels.

133.2 Ensure that accurate measuring devices are used in recording HCR miles, contractor performance, and exceptional service performed.

133.3 Must notify Division Managers of any problems and corrective action being taken.

133.4 Provide the necessary support for administrative officials charged with the responsibility of day-to-day management of box delivery operations.

134 Administrative Officials

134.1 Administrative Responsibilities

134.11 Screening. Administrative officials must collect screening information from contractors on the appropriate forms. They also issue and retrieve identification badges when requested by the TMSC manager. All information developed in the screening process must be treated as confidential and retained in a locked file.

134.12 Contract File Folder. Administrative officials must maintain up-to-date file folders for all HCRs at their offices. The right side will contain material of a permanent nature. The left side of the folder is used to hold forms and correspondence of a temporary nature which may be periodically disposed of according to established instructions. The file folder must also include a *detailed* record of the contractor's performance on the route.

134.13 Address Assignments and Changes. The administrative official must establish procedures for recording address changes and for assigning contract box numbers or street addresses.

134.14 Roster and Map. The administrative official must maintain a roster of customers and a current route map indicating line of travel, residences, and box locations. When the contractor cases the mail, the contractor will provide the list. When mail is cased by postal personnel, the list will be developed jointly.

134.15 Mark-ups. The administrative official will instruct the contractor on procedures to be followed in the forwarding and mark-up of mail. In those instances where central mark-up is available for postal personnel, it must also be made available to box delivery contractors.

134.16 Reports. Administrative officials prepare and maintain all regular and special reports requested by the TMSC manager.

134.2 Supervisory Responsibilities

134.21 General. Administrative officials must carry out the supervisory responsibilities in 134.22 through 134.29.

134.22 Compliance with Regulations. Ensure that mail is properly delivered to customers. They must be familiar with the terms of the contract and all regulations and policies pertaining to box delivery operations, and they must supervise the operation efficiently in accordance with the contract regulations and policies.

134.23 Service Changes. Place service changes into effect only upon receipt from the TMSC of Form 7440 or Form 7440-A, *Change in Schedule Notice*, showing service or schedule changes and effective dates. If there is no change in scheduled mileage or time, postmasters may authorize additional boxes *along the line of travel* and maintain clusters wherever possible. Report these changes quarterly to the TMSC.

134.24 Monitoring

134.241 Ensure that contractors report at times provided in their contracts and depart for their routes on schedule.

134.242 Record contractor performance data daily on Form 5398, *Transportation Performance Report*, or Form 5399, *Record of Performance of Contract Routes*. This includes reporting time, departure time, return time, detours, omitted service, etc. Time cards may be used where appropriate.

134.243 Report any serious operating failures promptly to the TMSC and immediately issue a Form 5500, *Contract Route Irregularity Report*.

134.244 Monitor contract route operations; submit HCR Efficiency Reports to the TMSC at the end of each A/P; and counsel contractors on performance and/or operational problems. Consult with TMSC manager concerning performance failures, i.e., how to develop a well documented case, etc.

134.245 Prepare recommendations to TMSC for corrective action for contractor irregularities beyond counseling stage after the contractor has been issued a "letter of warning."

134.25 Exceptional Service. Certify on the last day of the A/P all detour, additional, and emergency service on Form 5429, *Certification of Exceptional Contract Service Performed*. Submit copies to the Postal Data Center, St. Louis, MO, to the appropriate division manager, to the respective TMSC, and to the contractor. Document

all omitted service and submit it to the TMSC not later than the close of the A/P in which the service was omitted.

134.26 Staffing

134.261 Provide adequate staffing to meet departure and arrival schedules and to process cutoffs.

134.262 Provide proper supervision and technical positions to monitor and record all aspects of highway operations.

134.263 The administrative official must provide a safe work area at the postal facility.

134.27 Surveys and Counts

134.271 Based on the guidelines and training provided by the contracting officer, administrative officials are to conduct surveys of contract box delivery routes during the fall of each year by physically riding the routes. Variations in methods or dates of inspections must be approved in advance by the TMSC manager. Forward a report on Form 5406, *Box Delivery Contract Route Survey*, and other documentation to the TMSC manager prior to the end of October of each year. Postal personnel performing route inspections must refrain from making commitments to the contractor, verbal or otherwise, regarding changes in the existing contract specifications. Submit proposed changes to the TMSC in accordance with established procedures.

134.272 In addition, a 1-week count of mail will be conducted on each highway contract box delivery route during the survey on a Route Data Volume Count form furnished by the TMSC manager. This mail count must accompany the Form 5406 furnished the TMSC manager.

134.273 Additional surveys and volume counts on Route Data/Volume Count forms may be required by the TMSC manager at other times during the year. Such counts will generally occur:

a. Immediately prior to or following resolicitation of a contract; and

b. When the contractor requests a change in the contract rate due to increase in customers/boxes and mail volume. *Note:* Mail volume counts are one criterion used in evaluating a contractor's workload and adjusting the contract rate. It is therefore important that these counts be accurate. Depending upon the individual route and circumstances involved, other factors or alternate methods may be necessary to evaluate workhour requirements (e.g., seasonal routes or routes having extreme volume fluctuations).

134.274 The administrative official must provide the contractor a copy of all route surveys, box counts, and mail volume counts.

134.28 Vehicle Inspections

134.281 The administrative official must inspect all vehicles used on the contract to ensure contract compliance.

134.282 Makes periodic checks of the carrier's vehicle to ensure that:

a. No mail is being left in vehicle;

b. Vehicle meets or exceeds the requirements of the contract;

c. The vehicle offers adequate protection against loss or damage of the mail, including possible damage due to adverse weather conditions; and

d. The round trip mileage does not excessively exceed the authorized mileage of the route. If excessive mileage is frequently shown, the reason must be determined and appropriate corrective action taken.

134.29 Route Analysis

134.291 Analyzes operating data recorded on Forms 5398 and 5399 for service and economic performance.

134.292 Periodically checks the contractor's work area (postal facility) asking:

a. Is the contractor's route book complete and current?

b. Are the entries of forwarding orders legible and complete?

c. Are change-of-address forms being utilized properly?

d. Is case properly labeled?

134.293 Evaluates contractor's operations to identify problems. Takes necessary action, including recommendations to TMSC for contracting officer action.

134.294 Recommends changes to highway routes from a service and/or economic standpoint. Keeps TMSC informed of all advance planning that will affect contract requirements, i.e., Area Mail Processing Center (AMPC), office closing, and new housing/business developments.

134.3 Responsibilities to Contractor

134.31 General. The administrative official is responsible to the contractor for the items in 134.32 through 134.34.

134.32 Office Equipment. Furnishing the type of office equipment necessary for the contractor to be able to perform efficiently, i.e., mail case, straps, trays, postal forms, etc.

134.33 Training. Administrative officials must provide route training for operators of newly awarded box delivery contracts. This formal training will be for three hours per day over a two-day period for a total of six formal hours of training. The contractor will be compensated at the hourly rate in the contract for training hours. Administrative officials must notify the TMSC when training is completed. Include work methods, procedures, labeling of cases, maintenance of customer roster book, processing of change of address cards, forwarding of mail, etc., in the training.

134.34 Keys. Issuing keys, if appropriate, to contractors on a daily basis and recovering them upon completion of the service at the end of each day. The postmaster will make arrangements for return of keys in the event the post office is closed when the contractor returns.

134.4 Responsibilities to Customers

134.41 General. The administrative official is responsible to the customers for the items in 134.42 through 134.44.

134.42 Complaints. Ensuring that contract box delivery route customer complaints are handled properly and expeditiously with prompt referral to the appropriate postmaster.

134.43 Requests for Service. Processing customer requests for service which will result in a change in contract service and ensuring that such requests meet the minimum guidelines and policy. Preparing Form 5406, *Box Delivery Contract Route Survey*, and forwarding it through authorized channels for consideration.

134.44 Accountable Mail. When practical, telephoning customers in advance to meet the contractor at the box for delivery of accountable mail, including special delivery.

135 Contractors

135.1 Performance Level. Contractors are required to perform 100 percent of the service specified in their contracts. This includes delivering the mail correctly, maintaining the contract schedule, providing the proper equipment, and adhering to individual contract requirements. Form 5500 will be issued by the administrative postmaster each time an irregularity occurs. Contractors not responding to Form 5500 within 10 days assume full responsibility for the irregularities. Clause 4 of Form 7407 deals with the service requirements for all box delivery contract routes. Exceptions, if any, will be contained in the solicitation/contract.

135.2 Screening. New contractors and employees must immediately complete and return screening forms to the administrative official, unless current screening records are on file. Based on these records, the administrative official may waive the screening requirement. The contractor is responsible for the return of terminated contractor/employee badges and for reporting lost

badges to the administrative postmaster immediately.

135.3 Equipment. The contractor is responsible for furnishing and properly maintaining the vehicle and any other equipment required by the contract. Equipment must comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

135.4 Hired Employees. Contractors hiring service employees who drive on a regularly-scheduled basis must by law pay such employees wages and fringe benefits outlined in the wage determination incorporated into the contract. Occasional relief employees and those who do not drive are exempt from wage determination requirements, but must be paid as instructed in Section (A), page 1, of Form 7382, *Additional General Provisions for Service Contracts*. For clarification, contact the TMSC manager.

135.5 Inquiries and Correspondence. The contractor is directly responsible to the administrative official for efficient performance of the contract, and any inquiry concerning the performance requirements should be directed to the administrative postmaster. All other inquiries should be directed to the TMSC manager (contracting officer). Contractors should respond promptly to all correspondence received from the TMSC and, when requested to do so, negotiate contract changes with the TMSC in a fair and reasonable manner. All correspondence concerning compensation must be directed to the TMSC.

135.6 Duties. The contractor must perform duties described in Chapter 3 and follow all instructions from the contracting officer, administrative official, or their authorized representatives.

135.7 Communication with Customers. Contractors must cooperate with administrative postmasters to ensure that customers are aware of the following:

a. Customers must file complaints on mail service with the postmaster not with the contractor.

b. Contractors will dismount when necessary to transact business involving registered, certified, insured, COD, special delivery, and Express Mail. (See 332.4 for dismounting instructions.)

c. Requests for service changes, box relocations, etc., must be filed with the postmaster.

d. Customers' boxes must be placed so that they may be safely and conveniently served by the contractors and should be located on the right side of the road in the direction of travel.

e. Boxes must be of approved rural type which conform to postal regulations.

f. Customers are responsible for keeping approaches to mail boxes clear of snow, ice, mud, parked vehicles, or other obstructions.

g. When more than one family uses a box, written agreement to such use must be filed with the postmaster. The number of families permitted to use a single box is limited to *five*.

h. Customers may use locks on boxes, providing the box has a slot large enough to accommodate the normal daily mail volume. The contractor will not open boxes which are locked, nor will the contractor accept keys for this purpose.

Chapter 2
Service Changes

210 Existing Contract

211 Requirements

211.1 Initiation. Recommendation for a service change may be initiated by the contractor, by the MSC manager, by the division manager, or by the administrative official. The TMSC manager must be provided with all relevant information.

211.2 Route Extensions

211.21 Policy. U.S. Postal Service policy is that contract box delivery extensions will be made in a timely manner. Extension will not be made until ordered by the contracting officer.

211.22 Petitions for Extension. Submit petitions for route extensions on Form 4027, *Petition for Change in Rural Delivery*. Extensions should serve an average of at least one new family per mile, including retrace. Other factors may also be considered, such as type and volume of mail. Generally, extensions are not made to improve existing service, or to provide door-to-door curbside service, or service over private roads, driveways, or lanes. Delivery should not be extended into cul-de-sacs; boxes should be erected at the intersection of the cul-de-sac on the main line of travel. *Each proposal must be evaluated upon its individual merits.* New boxes should be located on the same side of the road as existing boxes, and they should be clustered if possible.

211.23 Permanent Mobile Homes/Trailer Courts, Subdivisions. In these areas, delivery may be made to:

a. A single point (delivery made to management office which provides final delivery to each resident);

b. Apartment-type receptacles in a central location; and

c. Boxes in clusters. Delivery to individual boxes along the extended line of travel will generally *not* be approved.

211.24 Transient Mobile Homes/Trailer Courts. Delivery will be provided only to a single delivery point (management office or other designated point), even though a minor portion of occupants may be permanent residents. Permanent residents may elect to provide boxes in clusters along the route line of travel outside the trailer court.

211.3 Administrative Official. For any request for service change, the administrative official must:

a. Ensure that Form 4027 from the customer meets the minimum requirement of 1 family per each additional mile.

b. Conduct a survey of the portion of the route where the change is recommended. Use Form 4003, *Official Rural Route Description*, for this purpose and highlight the proposed changes in travel itinerary or miles.

c. Prepare a map to show clearly the recommended changes and distances to the nearest 1/10 of a mile. The information shown on the map must be reflected on Form 4003.

d. Prepare and send to the TMSC, through the MSC and division, Form 5406 for every proposed service change, together with all supporting documentation. The original will be sent to the TMSC and a copy will be kept by the MSC/SCF/division. Allow approximately 30 days for obtaining TMSC concurrence and for permitting the TMSC to negotiate the change with the contractor. Administrative officials must keep the TMSCs informed of possible changes due to AMPC, office closings, etc. Items to be considered or developed in recommending a change:

(1) Schedule must be realistic and accurately reflect the daily average running time requirement.

(2) Forms submitted by the administrative official through the MSC/division to the TMSC should have all items completed.

(3) Map must clearly show the recommended changes and distances to the nearest 1/10 of a mile.

(4) The administrative official may *not* transfer the casing, markup, and forwarding of mail or other related duties which are presently being performed by craft employees to highway contractors or contract employees, except as indicated in 211.3d(5) below.

(5) If the administrative official has an unusual or questionable case (one which may possibly warrant a transfer of duties as described in (4) above), a recommendation proposing the change must be submitted through the MSC/division to the TMSC manager, together with all supporting facts. The TMSC will review the request and advise the administrative official of the approval or disapproval of each request. The TMSC manager must obtain Headquarters concurrence with all approvals.

212 Compensation Adjustment

212.1 Contracting Officer Authority. The TMSC manager (contracting officer's representative (COR)) may order a service change which does not increase or decrease the contractor's pay by more than 10 percent of the annual rate or $1,000, whichever is less. All other changes must be negotiated by the TMSC manager before the effective date of the change. *The administrative official is not authorized to negotiate changes or otherwise amend the contract.*

212.2 Quarterly Reviews

212.21 Administrative officials are required to review each box delivery contract at least *once each postal quarter*. This review will reflect any changes in the number of boxes, stops, or miles since the last review or inspection. The results of these reviews will be submitted to the contracting officer for any necessary adjustment in the contractor's compensation.

212.22 The administrative official will inform the contracting officer when the contractor's boxes are increased or decreased by 7 or more during any postal quarter or the contractor's mileage increases or decreases by 1 mile, including retrace.

212.3 Negotiations

212.31 The contracting officer will negotiate with the contractors any change in service that results from postal quarterly reviews of box delivery contracts that are reported by the administrative official or the contractor and exceed the quarterly review minimums for an adjustment. See 212.1 for maximum adjustment that contracting officer may make without negotiations.

212.32 If the contracting officer and the contractor are unable to mutually agree to an adjustment in the annual hours for a service change, apply the following formula. Compute adjustments in the annual hours for casing and route operations using two constant factors. Multiply the number of additional boxes by 3.64 and the additional miles by 10.40. The sum of the two equals the new hours added to the contract. For example, ten new boxes and three additional miles are added to the route. Multiply 10 boxes by 3.64 = 36.40. Multiply 3 miles x 10.40 = 31.20. Add 36.40 + 31.20 = 67.60 to obtain the total number of additional hours.

212.33 Certain economic adjustments are allowed for by the contract. *The administrative official is not to influence the contractor regarding the contractor's application for adjustment.*

220 Rural Service Versus Contract Service

221 Supersedure of Rural Delivery by Contract Service

Contract service may be established or extended to provide for delivery and collection service to postal customers served by a rural route under the following conditions:

a. A rural route becomes vacant when it does not serve a minimum of one family per mile, it may then be converted to contract delivery. A physical survey of the route must be made to determine if the route serves less than one family, per mile. The survey may be conducted when it is learned that the route will become vacant or when it actually becomes vacant. Include in the family count all businesses which receive mail on the route but are not operated out of a family residence. Once completed, the survey determining the actual family count must be used as a basis for conversion within a reasonable period of time. *Note:* If a survey is necessary, notify the concerned National Rural Letter Carriers Association (NRLCA) steward in writing of the USPS intent to conduct the survey and of the possibility that the route may be converted to contract service and, therefore, not be posted.

b. Parts of rural routes may be converted to contract service to provide greater efficiency and/or greater economy of service.

c. If a segment of a rural route becomes detached from the route so that it is impractical for the carrier to serve the segment, that segment may be converted to contract service. Detached refers to a physical separation, such as that caused by the construction of a dam which separates a rural route from a portion of its territory. In these cases, management (contracting officer or other officials) will determine the means of delivery to the detached.

d. Conversion of rural delivery to HCR delivery will normally not be considered unless a cost reduction would result.

222 Supersedure of Contract Service by Rural Delivery

222.1 During Contract Period. A contract route will not be replaced by rural delivery service during the contract period unless the contractor consents in writing or there is a worthwhile improvement in service.

222.2 At End of Contract Period. A contract route will not be replaced by rural delivery service at the end of the contract period unless there will be a worthwhile service improvement or a reasonable cost reduction. *Exceptions:* Exceptions to 222.1 and 222.2 may be made when post offices on routes are closed or consolidated, making it impractical to continue HCR service.

Chapter 3
Contractor Duties

310 General

311 Contract Requirements

311.1 Service Requirements. The contractor is required to deposit all mail in the appropriate mailboxes of customers placed along the assigned line of the route. The contractor is also required to receive all mail properly tendered by customers. The contractor may be required to prepare and maintain a current list of names and box numbers of customers.

311.2 Full Rural Features Required. In addition to delivery and collection of ordinary mail, the contractor may be required to perform the following duties:

a. Sell stamps and supplies.

b. Accept money with applications for money orders and give receipts.

c. Accept and give receipts for matter presented for registration, certification, insurance, or COD service.

d. Deliver registered, certified, insured, COD, special delivery, Express Mail, and postage due mail. Contractors will dismount when necessary to transact business involving the above classes of mail.

312 Sanctity of the Mail

312.1 Examining Mail. Contractors must not open, read, or search mail. Mail must not be exhibited to anyone other than the addressee or addressee's authorized agent.

312.2 Riders in Vehicles. While performing their contractual duties, contractors and their employees may not transport in their vehicles individuals who have not been screened. (See 134.11.)

313 Safety

313.1 Accidents. If involved in an accident, contractors or drivers should remain at the scene, if practical, until they have:

a. Obtained aid and assistance for injured persons;

b. Safeguarded the scene against further accident;

c. Secured and protected the mail;

d. Notified the administrative official; and

e. Notified local or state police.

313.2 Firearms. Contractors and their employees are prohibited from carrying firearms on their persons while on postal property.

314 Maintenance of Schedule

Contractors must operate on the published schedule. In some instances, administrative officials or their authorized representatives may hold contractors for mail from a connecting late trip, or when other unusual circumstances exist. When a contractor is held beyond the scheduled dispatch time, issue a Form 5466, *Late Slip*.

315 Unusual Situations

Contractors must report detours, customer problems, and potential route changes to the administrative official. Contractors must not circulate or encourage the circulation of petitions for changes in service. All questions relating to schedules, extensions, or new service must be referred to the administrative official. Contractors should also report repeated postal caused schedule delays to the contracting officer.

316 Courtesy

Contractors and their employees must display a courteous and helpful attitude to customers and postal personnel.

320 Office Work

321 Reporting Time

Contractors must report for duty at the time specified in the contract or, if no specific time is stated, they must report in sufficient time to case (if contract requires casing), load, and depart on schedule. Contractors must report to a designated postal employee for the recording on Form 5398, *Transportation Performance Record*, or Form 5399, *Contract Routes Performance Record*, of the time contractors begin work, leave the office, return to the office, and complete their duties daily. Time cards may be used where appropriate.

322 Casing

When a contractor is required to case mail, label the case in order of delivery from left to right. Name and box number of the customer should appear on each label. The administrative official will provide instruction in the most efficient casing method.

323 Strapping and Loading

After all mail has been cased, it must be trayed or strapped into bundles marked in delivery sequence. Load all mail into the vehicle in sequence of delivery to ensure that time is not lost searching for the proper bundles, parcels, or containers. Check case and work area to ensure that no mail has been left or fallen into or behind cases, under shelves, etc.

324 Accountable Items

324.1 Accountable Mail. Accountable mail items are postage due, customs duty, special delivery, COD, certified, registered, and Express Mail. The administrative official will instruct contractors as to the method of receipt for accountable items. See 340 for specific delivery instructions for accountable mail.

324.2 Post Office Keys. If the contractor serves post office box or lobby lockups, the administrative official will issue keys to the contractor at the start of each trip. The contractor is responsible for turning in the keys at the end of each trip. Where postal employees are not on duty when the contractor returns, the administrative postmaster must provide a key drop. Contractors who lose keys will be responsible for the cost of replacing affected locks and keys.

325 Roster of Customers

If the contractors case mail, they must maintain a current alphabetical roster of customers with a box number opposite each name. The administrative official may also require the contractor to maintain a customer roster arranged in box number sequence. *The contractor may not directly or indirectly furnish to others the names and addresses of customers. The contractor may not use customer names and addresses to further personal business schemes.*

326 Fixed Credits

Postage stamp fixed credits are normally issued to contractors whose contracts require full rural features. (See 311.2.) If contractors prefer to purchase stamp stock with personal funds, they may do so. Fixed credits are issued and replenished at the headout office unless intermediate offices are served. Fixed credits will be replenished at an intermediate office according to the amount of stamps sold to customers of that office. Contractors should maintain a sufficient quantity of stamps to service the needs of their customers.

330 Route Performance

331 Line of Travel

Contractors must follow the official line of travel described in the contract as currently amended by schedule or service changes on Form 7440, *Contract Route Service Order*, or Form 7440-A, *Change in Schedule Notice*. Contractors should

proceed to the first box on the route where mail is to be delivered and/or collected and begin service. *Even if there is no mail for a particular box, the contractor must stop to make collection when the signal flag is raised.* Regulate travel so that the contractor arrives at boxes at about the same time each day.

332 Delivery of Mail

332.1 Delivery as Addressed. Mail must be delivered as addressed unless the contractor knows that the addressee does not reside at the address. Mail addressed to a box and route number must be delivered even though there is no customer name on the mail. Return undeliverable mail to the post office.

332.2 Occupant or Boxholder Mail. Deliver one to each box on the route until supply is exhausted. If sufficient quantity is received, deliver one to each single box. Return excess to post office. When the supply of boxholder mail is insufficient, the contractor should tell the administrative official how many will be needed to provide full coverage. Based on mail volume and operating conditions, the administrative official may allow delivery of this mail over a two-day period.

332.3 Parcels. Parcels are to be taken out for delivery on the first trip after receipt. If a parcel is too large for the box, the contractors should attempt to attract the customer by sounding their horn. If the parcel cannot be delivered on the first trip, leave a Form 3849, *Delivery Notice/Reminder/Receipt,* in the customer's box. A second attempt to deliver should be made if the customer desires. Leave Form 3849 endorsed "Final Notice" if delivery cannot be made on the second attempt. Packages too large for a box may be left outside the box only if the customer has filed a written agreement with the administrative official. However, never leave parcels outside boxes during inclement weather.

332.4 Dismounting. Normally mail is delivered to boxes without dismounting. If contractors serve apartment houses or other multiple dwellings which use apartment house receptacles or clusters, they will dismount to serve these. They will also dismount when necessary to transact business involving registered, certified, insured, COD, special delivery, and Express Mail and to obtain signed receipts for other accountable mail. (See section 340.)

333 Unusual Conditions

333.1 Delays. The contractor is responsible for the delivery of all mail in all situations. In the event of an unforeseen substantial delay, such as inclement weather or vehicle breakdown or accident, the contractor must first ensure the safety of the mail and then telephone the administrative official (collect, if necessary) as quickly as possible.

333.2 Unfavorable Road Conditions

333.21 Contractors must make every reasonable effort to perform service to as many customers as possible during severe weather conditions.

333.22 The contractor should, if possible, report for work regardless of weather conditions. The administrative official will carefully consider traffic advisories and media reports in determining whether to request the contractor to attempt normal delivery, make necessary detours, or suspend delivery altogether. Safety factors *must* be considered.

333.23 Contractors should use alternate roads and retrace when necessary or authorized by the administrative official. They are not expected to dismount and serve blocked portions of a route. Report all route deviations, with an odometer record of miles traveled, to the administrative official.

333.24 When an extensive detour becomes necessary to effect delivery to customers, the contractor should ask the administrative postmaster, when practical, to prepare notices to customers to:

a. Temporarily relocate their mailboxes;

b. Arrange to receive mail through other customer boxes;

c. Make other arrangements for receiving mail until normal service can be restored; or

d. Accept reduced delivery frequency until condition is corrected.

334 Box Problems

Contractors should report any problems affecting delivery or collection to the administrative official, who will investigate any deficiencies and issue written notices to the customers. *It is the administrative official's responsibility to resolve these problems with the customers.* The contractor will issue Form 4056, *Your Mailbox Needs Attention,* where appropriate.

335 Sign

The use of a "U.S. Mail" sign on the vehicle is permissible, but only when the vehicle is actually carrying mail. *Any other use of the USPS emblem facsimile is prohibited.*

340 Special Services and Accountable Mail

341 General

341.1 Responsibility. Responsibility for accountable (see 324.1) mail is assumed by the contractor upon receipt from the administrative official. All accountable mail (other than special delivery and Express Mail) will be delivered only to the customer box. Dismounting may be required to transact business involving registered, certified, insured, COD, special delivery, and Express Mail. Any accountable mail found mixed in with the regular mail should be given to the administrative official for disposition.

341.2 Customer Notification

341.21 Postmasters should telephone customers to inform them to meet the contractor at the box for special services and accountable mail, including special delivery and Express Mail.

341.22 Form 3849 is used to notify customers and/or obtain receipt for all accountable mail. In smaller offices where the mail check claim system is not used, Form 3849 is used for notice to customers on all appropriate types of mail. Contractors should follow the procedures established by the administrative official.

342 Registered Mail

Unless the customer has requested otherwise, registered mail will be delivered on the first trip following its receipt. The addressee or person representing the addressee may obtain the name and address of the sender and may look at the registered mail while it is held by the contractor before signing the delivery receipt. Identification will be required if the applicant for registered mail is unknown. If the register(s) cannot be delivered on the first trip, leave a Form 3849, *Delivery Notice/Reminder/Receipt,* in the customer's box. A second attempt to deliver should be made if the customer desires. Leave Form 3849 endorsed "Final Notice" if delivery cannot be made on the second attempt. In addition, if return receipt is desired by the mailer, contractors must obtain customer signature on Form 3811, *Domestic Return Receipt.*

343 Insured Mail

Unnumbered packages will be delivered as ordinary parcels. For numbered packages, contractors will use Form 3849 to obtain customer receipt. If return receipt is desired by the mailer, contractor must also obtain customer signature on Form 3811.

344 Special Delivery Mail

Contractors may take special delivery to the customer's home, if the home is not more than 1/2 mile from the route line of travel for a total round trip of one mile, and if such service does not cause a substantial delay. If delivery is attempted and cannot be made to the customer residence, Form 3849 is left at the residence and the special delivery article is placed in the customer box.

345 Certified Mail

Instructions for the delivery of certified mail are the same as those for registered mail. (See 342.)

346 Postage Due Mail

Postage due mail is delivered only after the full amount due has been paid. Use Form 3849 to notify customer when delivery cannot be made.

347 COD Mail

347.1 Examination by Customer. Addressee or addressee's representative may read and copy the name and address of the mailer of COD mail while in the possession of the contractor. *Examination of the contents may be made only after charges have been paid and delivery accomplished.*

347.2 Charges to Collect. Contractor will collect the charges entered on Form 3816, *C.O.D. Article--Delivery Employee Coupon/Mailing Office Coupon/Mailer's Receipt.* If there is a difference between the amount of charges shown on the tag and the amount on the package, collect the higher amount. Customer must have the exact amount of money needed to pay for COD charges and money order fee (see administrative official regarding acceptance of personal checks).

347.3 Delivery Procedure. Detach Form 3816 from the parcel and have the customer sign in the space provided. Contractors must enter date of delivery and initials, and return tag with the funds to the postmaster or designated representative, together with undelivered COD mail. Tags will be receipted by the clearing employee and returned to the contractor. *Tags must be retained by the contractors for 2 years.*

347.4 COD Not Delivered. When delivery cannot be made, contractors should endorse the article with the reasons, initial, and return with tag to the administrative official. Form 3849 should be completed and left at the customer box.

348 Customs Duty Mail

Contractors must collect from customer the amount shown on U.S. Customs Form 3419 plus the postage due indicated on the parcel. The customer signs on bottom line of original Form 3419; the contractor signs the duplicate Form 3419 and delivers it with the parcel to the addressee. The contractor then returns the original Customs Form 3419 and all money collected to the administrative official.

349 Express Mail

349.1 Delivery Procedure. Have the addressee or agent sign in the signature block on Label 11-B, *Express Mail Next Day Service Post Office to Addressee.* Do not use any other record or receipt. Enter the exact time, date of delivery, and your initials on the label. Snap out the *proof of delivery* copy. Give the article to the agent or addressee and return the form to the post office for clearance.

349.2 Express Mail Not Delivered. When delivery cannot be made, complete and leave Form 3849. The contractor will apply the same delivery for Express Mail that applies to special delivery. (See 344.)

350 Collection and Disposition

351 General

Contractors will collect any properly stamped First-Class Mail from mailboxes placed along the line of the route when the box signal flag is up indicating that the box contains mail for collection. Other classes of mail will be collected provided the customer meets the contractor and provides the contractor with sufficient funds to cover the mailing. The article will be taken to the next post office for mailing and any excess money will be returned to the customer on the next trip.

352 Special Service and Accountable Mail

352.1 Registered Mail. Customers may register an article by paying the required postage and fees. Contractors prepare Form 3896, *Receipt for*

Registered Article, in duplicate and give carbon copy to the customer. Return the article together with the original Form 3896, the stub from the carbon copy, and money for postage and fees to the postmaster or designee for registering. Take care to keep registered mail separate from other mail collected.

352.2 Insured Mail. Contractors issue the customer a Form 1096, *Cash Receipt,* endorsed "Temporary" to show the amount of money received for postage and fees and the name of the destination post office. Contractors take the mail to the post office where stamps are affixed to cover the postage and fees. A complete insurance receipt is returned to the customer, together with any excess money collected, in envelope Form 4245, *Carrier's Statement.*

352.3 COD Mail. Contractor furnishes the sender Forms 3816 of which there are two types: one is eyeletted for tying to parcels and one is uneyeletted for attaching by gummed tape. All particulars on the tag must be completed by the sender and attached to the article. Contractors issue the sender the Customer's Receipt portion of Form 3816.

352.4 Certified Mail. issue the customer a Form 3800, *Receipt for Certified Mail,* after all fees and postage are paid. Attach certified number to the article. If customer desires a return receipt, the customer should fill out Form 3811. Attach Form 3811 to the article and return to the post office for mailing.

353 Money Orders

Issue customer a Form 6387, *Rural Money Order Transaction,* for completion. When completed Form 6387 with money and fee is received from the customer, issue the customer the receipt portion of Form 6387. If change cannot be made, provide it on the next trip, along with the Form 6387 application section, customer's receipt, and money order. Turn in application and money to the headout post office unless there is an intermediate office which can process the money order without delay. When contractor leaves the office before issuance of the money order, give the contractor a receipt on Form 1096.

354 Money and Unstamped Mail

Contractors have stamps and cards for sale to customers. Contractors should urge customers to affix stamps to mail as much as possible. When unstamped mail and money for postage is found in a box, contractors should collect the money and the mail and affix stamps. Money left in boxes is left at the risk of the customer. When customers repeatedly leave large numbers of unstamped letters in the box, report this to the administrative official for investigation and corrective action.

355 Amount of Postage Unknown

When mail is given to contractors with money for postage, and the contractors are unable to determine the amount of postage, they should accept from the sender an amount sufficient to ensure full payment of postage. Return any excess money to the customer on the next trip.

356 Insufficient Postage

When mail matter is left in a box for mailing without postage, insufficient postage, or insufficient money for postage, leave notice that the matter cannot be mailed until sufficient postage is paid. If the sender of the matter cannot be identified, take it to the post office where it will be treated as unpaid mail.

357 Recall of Mail

Mail deposited in a collection box may be recalled upon proper identification by the sender, by the parent or guardian of a minor child, or by the guardian of a person of unsound mind who sent the mail. *Direct all requests for recall to the administrative official.*

Chapter 4
Office Work After Return to Office

410 Undeliverable Mail

When contractors are unable to deliver ordinary and insured parcels, they will deposit a completed Form 3849 in the customer's mail box. Then the parcel will be placed in a designated location.

420 Markup and Forwarding

Contractors may be required to markup and forward mail for customers who have filed change of address orders; and to make appropriate entry in the customer roster. The administrative official, or authorized representative, will instruct contractors in the procedure to be followed.

430 Changes of Address

Contractors should use the procedures established by the administrative official to record changes of address. The administrative official is responsible for assignment of contract box numbers and/or street addresses.

440 Report of Exceptional Service

Contractors must report and explain to the administrative official *daily* any deviation from the scheduled line of travel, such as a detour or curtailment of service. The report must include the miles scheduled on that day and the miles actually traveled, shown to the nearest 1/10 of a mile.

450 Disposition of Postal Funds

Postal funds must be kept separate from personal money. All postal funds must be turned in upon completion of route service to the appropriate postmaster, supervisor, or designated employee. If the postal facility is not open, the administrative official will make necessary arrangements. If contractors do not wish to hold postal funds while on layover at an outer office, arrangements may be made with the local post office to hold such funds for safekeeping.

Chapter 5
Inspections

510 Definition

The inspection of a box delivery contract route is the physical inspection of the route conditions made by the administrative official or authorized representative while accompanying the contractor on the route.

520 Frequency

All contract box delivery routes will be inspected at least once a year or more often as directed by the contracting officer.

530 Purpose

The purpose of the inspection is to obtain current and accurate data, including (but not limited to) route and delivery conditions, number of boxes served, and minimum stops possible to serve all boxes on the route. Route layout is reviewed by management to identify necessary route travel changes to improve efficiency and economy of service. In addition, any hazardous conditions must be examined and action taken to correct them.

540 Contractor Responsibilities

During the inspection, box delivery contractors must:

a. Travel the route and deliver the mail precisely as they do the rest of the year;

b. Inform the administrative official or representative making the inspection of any boxes that have remained vacant for over 90 days; and

c. Assist in identifying hazardous conditions on the route and recommend actions to eliminate or reduce them.

Appendix A
Abbreviations and Acronyms Used in Highway Transportation Box Delivery Service

AMPC	Area Mail Processing Center
A/P	Accounting Period
AO	Administrative Official
CO	Contracting Officer
COR	Contracting Officer Representative
DM	Division Manager
DMM	Domestic Mail Manual
HCR	Highway Contract Route
IFB	Invitation for Bid
MSC	Management Sectional Center
NDCBU	Neighborhood Delivery and Collection Box Unit
POM	Postal Operations Manual
PVS	Postal Vehicle Service
SCF	Sectional Center Facility
TMSC	Transportation Management Service Center
USPS	United States Postal Service

Appendix B
Forms Glossary

Form Number	Title	Reference
PS 1096	Cash Receipt	352.2; 353
PS 3800	Receipt for Certified Mail	352.4
PS 3811	Domestic Return Receipt	342; 352.4
PS 3816	C.O.D. Article--Delivery Employee Coupon/Mail Office Coupon/Mailer's Receipt	347.2; 347.3; 352.3
PS 3849	Delivery Notice/Reminder/Receipt	332.3; 341.22; 342; 344; 346; 347.4; 349.2; 410
PS 3896	Receipt for Registered Article	352.1
PS 4003	Official Rural Route Description	211.3
PS 4027	Petition for Change in Rural Delivery	211.22
PS 4056	Your Mailbox Needs Attention	334
PS 4245	Carrier's Statement	352.2
PS 5398	Transportation Performance Record	134.242; 134.291; 321
PS 5399	Record of Performance of Contract Routes	134.242; 134.291; 321
PS 5406	Box Delivery Contract Route Survey	134.271; 134.272; 134.43; 211.3(d)
PS 5407	Highway Contract Route Survey/Service Change	134.43; 211.3
PS 5429	Certification of Exceptional Contract Service Performed	134.25
PS 5466	Late Slip	314
PS 5500	Contract Route Irregularity Report	134.243; 135.1
PS 6387	Rural Money Order Transaction	353
PS 7382	Additional General Provisions for Service Contracts	135.4
PS 7407	Basic Surface Transportation Services Contract General Provisions	131.2(c); 135.1
PS 7440	Contract Route Service Order	131.4; 134.23; 331
PS 7440-A	Change in Schedule Notice	134.23; 331
Customs Form 3419	Mail Entry -- Customs	348
Label 11-B	Express Mail Next Day Service Post Office to Addressee	349.1

Appendix C
Other Forms Associated with Highway Transportation Contracts

Form Number	Title
PS 5420	Certification of Insurance
PS 7319-C	Representations and Certifications
PS 7405	Transportation Services Bid or Proposal and Contract
PS 7406	Amendment to Transportation Services Contract
PS 7409	Notice of Acceptance--Transportation Services Contract Bid or Proposal
PS 7435	Solicitation for Transportation Services Contract
PS 7436	Abstract of Bids or Proposals Received (Transportation Services Contract)
PS 7447	Transportation Services Renewal Contract
PS 7448	Notice of Renewal of Transportation Services Contract
PS 7463	Cost Statement--Highway Transportation Contracts
PS 7463-A	Negotiated Cost Statement--Highway Transportation Contract
PS 7464	Cost Statement (Short Form)--Highway Transportation Contracts
PS 7464-A	Negotiated Cost Statement (Short Form)--Highway Transportation Contracts
PS 7468-A	Highway Transportation Contract--Bid or Renewal Worksheet
PS 7468-B	Short Form--Cost Statement
PS 7469	Highway or Domestic Water Transportation Contract Information and Instructions

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